

## Tips for Hiring a Roofing Contractor

### Replacing Your Roof

The age of your roof is usually the major factor in determining when to replace it. Most roofs last many years if properly installed and often can be repaired rather than replaced. An isolated leak usually can be repaired. The average life expectancy of a typical residential roof is 15 to 20 years.

Water damage to a home's interior or overhangs is commonly caused by leaks from a single weathered portion of the roof, poorly installed flashing, or from around chimneys and skylights. These problems do not necessarily mean you need a new roof.

### Preserving Your Roof

Whatever the roofing material—composition shingle, wood shake, tile or metal—the best way to preserve your roof is to stay off it. Also, seasonal changes in the weather are usually the most destructive forces.

### Maintaining Your Roof

Homeowner maintenance includes cleaning the leaves and debris from the roof's valleys and gutters. Debris in the valleys can cause water to wick under the shingles and cause damage to the interior of the roof. Clogged rain gutters can cause water to flow back under the shingles on the eaves and cause damage.

### Hiring a Licensed Contractor

One of the best ways to select a roofing contractor is to ask friends or relatives for recommendations. You may also contact a professional roofers association for referrals. Professional associations have stringent guidelines for their members to follow. The roofers association in your area will provide you with a list of available contractors.

Contact the Contractors State License Board at (800) 321-CSLB (2752) or visit the CSLB Web site at [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov). CSLB's online license check allows you to verify that the contractor is licensed and to check the status of the license. You can also verify the contractor's bond information, workers compensation policy information and if there have been any legal actions filed against the license by CSLB. The Web site also has links to professional associations and to other related state agency Web sites.

### Follow These Tips When Hiring a Roofing Contractor

- Hire only licensed contractors.
- Contact the Contractors State License Board at [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov) or at (800) 321-CSLB (2752) to verify the contractor's license.
- Get three references and review past work.
- Get at least three bids.
- Get a written contract and don't sign anything until you completely understand the terms.
- Pay 10 percent down or \$1,000 whichever is less.
- Don't let payments get ahead of the work.
- Don't pay cash.
- Don't make final payment until you're satisfied with the job.
- Don't rush into repairs or be pressured into making an immediate decision

### You've Chosen the Contractor . . . What About the Contract?

Make sure everything is in writing. The contract is one of the best ways to prevent problems before you begin. The contract protects you and the contractor by including everything you have both agreed upon. Get all promises in writing and spell out exactly what the contractor will and will not do.

### . . . and Permits?

Your contract should call for all work to be performed in accordance with all applicable building codes. The building codes set minimum safety standards for construction. Generally, a building permit is required whenever structural work is involved. The contractor should obtain all necessary building permits. If this is not specified in the contract, you may be held legally responsible for failure to obtain the required permit. The building department will inspect your roof when the project has reached a certain stage and again when the roof is completed.

### . . . and Insurance?

Make sure the contractor carries worker's compensation insurance and general liability insurance in case of accidents on the job. Ask to have copies of these policies for your job file. For more specific information on contracts, order or download CSLB's free booklet, *Home Improvement Contracts: Putting the Pieces Together*.

### Mechanics' Liens

You should protect yourself from mechanics' liens against your home in the event the contractor does not pay subcontractors or material suppliers. You may be able to protect yourself by having a *release of lien clause* in your contract. A release of lien clause requires the contractor, subcontractors and suppliers to furnish a *certificate of waiver of lien*. If you are financing your project, the bank or lending institution may require that the contractor, subcontractors and suppliers verify that they have been paid, before releasing funds for subsequent phases of the project.

## Handling Problems

If problems arise during or after construction, talk to your contractor. Usually he or she will make corrections willingly. If your contractor refuses to make corrections, you may want to file a complaint with the CSLB.

First:

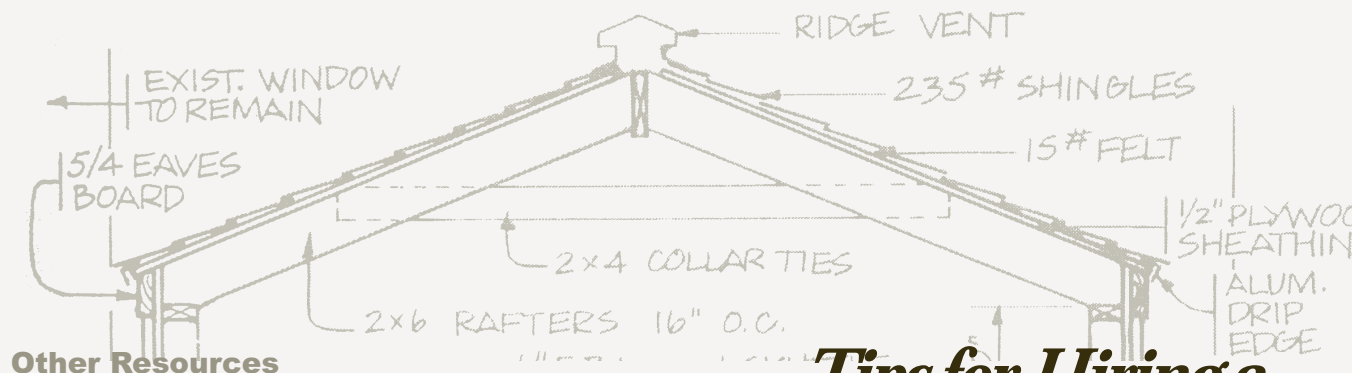
- Gather all papers relating to your project, including contracts, change orders and cancelled checks.
- Take photographs of the problems.
- Notify the contractor in writing of your dissatisfaction.
- Order a free copy of CSLB's "A Consumer Guide to Filing Construction Complaints" and the complaint form.

Contact the Contractors State License Board at [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov) or at (800) 321-CSLB (2752) to get information on filing a complaint. The Board will investigate and mediate your complaint if it falls within the Board's jurisdiction.

The Contractors State License Board offers free publications to review before you get started on your roofing project:

- *What You Should Know Before You Hire a Contractor*
- *Home Improvement Contracts: Putting the Pieces Together*

You can order these booklets online at [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov) or call toll free at (800) 321-CSLB (2752).



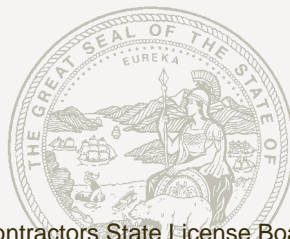
## Other Resources

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) maintains a Web site at [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org), which provides information, tips, and how to contact the BBB near you.

The Roofing Contractors Association of California also has information on its Web site at [www.rcacal.org](http://www.rcacal.org).

## Tips for Hiring a Roofing Contractor:

## A Consumer's Rights & Responsibilities



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Sacramento, CA 95826-0026

1-800-321-CSLB (2752)

[www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov)

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